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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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10-11-2007

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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

MEETING # 3 Minutes

October 11, 2007, 8:00 a.m., Behmler 130

Present: Roland Guyotte (chair), Gwen Rudney, Barbara Burke, Janet Ericksen, Van Gooch, Michael Korth, Pareena Lawrence, Ferolyn Angell, Harold Hinds, Laura Thoma, Kim Ukura, Jeri Mullin, Clare Strand, Nancy Helsper, Sara Haugen, Dorothy DeJager

Absent: Escillia Allen, Nate Swanson

Visiting: Brenda Boever

In these minutes: Course changes in biology and math; discussion of areas of concentration

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Guyotte asked for approval of minutes from September 13, 2007.

MOTION: (Korth/Rudney) To approve the minutes from September 13 (with change)

VOTE: Motion passed (9-0-0)

Discussion: Angell asked that her comment in the middle of page 2 regarding the lack of academic assistance representation on the first year experience committee include the reasoning that people in academic assistance have expertise in the area of first year experience.

2. COURSE CHANGES

Biol 1111 Fundamentals of Genetics, Evolution, and Development

MOTION: (Gooch/Angell) To approve the removal of course equivalency from Biol 1101

VOTE: Motion passed (10-0-0)

Discussion: Korth explained that biology would like to remove the course equivalency from Biol 1101 because it was causing some unintended consequences. Lawrence asked when 1101 was last offered and whether students who have taken it would still be able to count it toward the major. Korth answered that it was last taught in spring 2007 and that it was equivalent at that time. The intent is not to change agreements that were in place when they were listed as equivalent courses. Mullin asked if the students will be able to receive credit for both courses. Gooch answered that he didn't see why they should not. They are very different courses. Guyotte added that students who took Biol 1101 last spring would have no motive to take Biol 1111. Strand asked whether it was correct to say that 1101 can substitute for 1111 but is not an equivalent course. Korth answered that the major requirement is now 1111, not 1101. Strand asked whether a student choosing to follow the new catalog can substitute if they've already taken 1101. Roland answered that a student can graduate under one bulletin, but not mix and match. Students who take 1101 are required to take genetics, and those who take 1111 will not be required to take genetics. They will each be following a slightly different path.

Math 4251 Problem Solving in Pure Math (*inactivate course*)

Math 4451 Fundamentals of Numerical Analysis (*inactivate course*)

MOTION: (Burke/Angell) To approve the inactivation of Math 4251 and Math 4451

VOTE: Motion passed (10-0-0)

Discussion: Korth proposed that the committee consider Math 4251 and 4451 together. They are not intending to offer the courses and request that the courses be inactivated.

3. AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

Guyotte asked Helsper to present the data that she had prepared for the committee. Helsper mentioned that an excerpt

from a February 9, 2005, Curriculum Committee meeting is included in the agenda materials because it shows that the templates were presented to the committee as an item for information and not for action. The spreadsheet included in the agenda materials lists areas of concentration that were approved by the dean. They do not represent the numbers that were carried through to graduation. Helsper pointed out that the areas of concentration in red are available as templates or prototypes. Sports management is not part of that grouping because it was already in the catalog as a template before the additional templates were created. Areas of concentration that later turned into major programs are not counted after the change. One table shows that while 198 students applied in the last 10 years, only 146 graduated in the last 10 years with an area of concentration. Helsper handed out another table that listed the number of majors per graduate. It indicates whether areas of concentration were more apt to have a single or double major. The results show that 65% of the graduates with areas of concentration over the last 10 years had no other major when they graduated. Campus-wide, 77% of UMM graduates had just one major. This suggests that students with areas of concentration are less likely to have just one major. Helsper also looked at students who graduated with distinction or high distinction and found that 17% of students with areas of concentration compared to 23% of all students graduated with such honors over the past 10 years. A total of 198 areas of concentration were approved in the last 10 years.

Lawrence suggested that Helsper include a column showing those for which the area of concentration is their only major. The idea behind an area of concentration is that students would have a second major. If sports management is pulled out, how many then are single majors? She added that including sports management muddies the picture. Strand stated that she is in the process of looking at converted records going back to the 1960s. As early as the 1970s we had a self-designed curriculum called Option II. Nothing in the records state that a self-designed major was intended as an addition to another major. Lawrence stated that when a group was formed to create prototypes of popular areas of concentration the concern was voiced that, since the prototypes didn't go through the divisions and were not approved by the Curriculum Committee, we may appear to be undermining disciplines and majors by encouraging students to create areas of concentration. Therefore, we should encourage a student to do a formal major and a self-designed major. Another concern is that areas of concentration don't have a senior capstone. The idea was suggested that when advising students it would be nice if the student had another major. Korth stated that the Curriculum Committee has never had that discussion. Hinds added that to argue that an area of concentration must accompany a second major undermines the idea that an area of concentration is a major. Korth stated that in the Division of Science and Math, areas of concentration do require a capstone. Strand added that a lot of areas of concentration have them. Ukura stated that she is working on an area of concentration in journalism with a capstone project in the form of an internship.

DeJager asked if her assumption was correct that the area of concentration major was approved by the board of regents. Guyotte answered that Option II was approved as an individualized curriculum, including both the major and general education. The dean is the guarantor that the people are taking the right courses. Lawrence worked with a group to create templates that would help guide the dean. Lawrence added that the group sent copies of areas of concentrations to the areas and faculty and came up with a prototype so students don't have to start from scratch if a plan for a similar area of concentration already exists. Angell asked how the results of the workgroup were communicated to the campus. Boever answered that the Advising Office put them on their Web site. The Dean's Office Web site on areas of concentration links to the advising Web site. Hinds recalled that Professor O'Loughlin had visited a curriculum committee meeting and described the program. There was no mention at that time about a double major. Guyotte added that were the Curriculum Committee to do what Lawrence advocated (requirement of a double major for areas of concentrations), approval of the change would have to go to the campus assembly for approval. Lawrence answered that it was just a suggestion based on concerns voiced by faculty.

Burke stated that she has advised students in areas of concentration in digital media and journalism. A student can declare a major and be assigned an adviser, but if they haven't completed the paperwork with the dean's approval, they would not appear in the data Helsper presented. For some students, they have declared the major but have not yet completed the plan. Strand added that there are 92 students in declared areas of concentration currently enrolled at UMM. Burke stated that the prototypes were prepared to be recruitment tools that would attract students who would not have come otherwise. Lawrence stated that the prototypes were also intended to be a retention tool. Students who leave campus because their major is not offered on campus could create their own major without having to jump through the hoops of starting from scratch.

Ericksen stated that her concern about areas of concentration is that no one in particular seems to be responsible for

updating the templates. She suggested that there be a clear label on the templates that says: "This is a model only. See your adviser." She also suggested that the templates be sent back to the people who created them, asking them to review the templates to make sure the courses are still current. She asked Boever if it was her responsibility to update the templates. Boever stated that she did during the last catalog edit because no one else was doing it.

Korth stated that templates are only examples. Every area of concentration has to be approved individually. Area of concentration is not a discipline; therefore disciplines should not have any responsibility for the templates. The whole concept that an area of concentration template needs some kind of approval seemed odd to him. Guyotte answered that he agreed that templates do not require approval, but added that something on the Web that says "take courses x, y, and z, and you will likely have the dean approve the area of concentration" may be misleading if the courses no longer exist. Korth answered that it is still just a template.

Angell stated that 148 graduates over 10 years is not a huge number. Strand added that we need to compare how many other graduates there are over other majors. Helsper answered that over 14 graduates a year is a fairly high average for UMM. Korth stated that if you remove sports management and those that eventually became majors, the number drops below 6. Hinds commented that a 74% rate of people who declared and actually finished appears to be good, from an adviser's point of view. He has found that advisees switch majors frequently. Helsper cautioned that this is a rough number because the group counted as receiving approval from the Dean is not exactly the same group counted as graduates. For instance, students with approved areas of concentration last year may not graduate for another 2-3 years. Lawrence stated that in the last few years the pace has picked up on the use of templates. She asked Helsper if she noticed that. Helsper answered that she had expected it but did not see it.

Angell stated that she noticed several questions resulting from the discussion, such as:

- 1) Should we have templates?
- 2) Should templates be available on the Web or only the form and procedures?
- 3) Should templates be approved by the curriculum committee?
- 4) Should the curriculum committee assign the task of updating or monitoring the templates?

Guyotte stated that the committee has heard the suggestions and most are of an administrative nature.

Burke added an additional question to the list:

- 5) Just as we have advising within a major, would it be appropriate to have certain select people be the areas of concentration advisers who can talk them through the process?

Boever stated that there are already people who are responsible for helping students through the process. Usually the faculty members that help students with areas of concentration talk to and consult with each other. It's not a formal structure, but it does happen.

Strand stated that first-year students can no longer declare a template that is not in the catalog because it's not an approved major. When a student actually gets the paperwork through the system, it's legitimate to add that particular focus to their major. The student thinks they know which area of concentration they want, but it doesn't indicate that in the system.

Burke asked whether the data Helsper provided for the committee is confidential or can be shared with colleagues.

Guyotte answered that the work of the committee is public.

Strand stated that the dean is chair of interdisciplinary studies and should perhaps have more hands-on involvement in interdisciplinary studies. She added that she is looking for direction on how to communicate with the students about the templates. She asked if she should tell them they should look to advising and go from there. Boever answered that the advising site has the templates. There is also a link on the academic programs page. Helsper added that the catalog directs students to the advising site. Guyotte asked whether the Grad Planner could insert a statement for students interested in an area of concentration that says something like "To plan an area of concentration, see your adviser." Thoma stated that as a student, it would be helpful to have a template of what it might consist of so that she could see it before talking to an adviser and before going through the steps of preparing the paperwork. Burke asked Thoma if she

meant to say that as a student she would prefer to have the information electronically available rather than have a discussion about it with the adviser. Thoma answered that, starting out, she would rather think about it and do some planning of her own before bringing it to the adviser. Helsper added that students occasionally come into the dean's office to ask for a copy of an approved area of concentration that they could use as a template. Boever stated that the templates on the advising Web site suggest that this is just a package of courses the student can take. If the template is put into APAS, it seems more formal and rigid and may appear to be the only way to accomplish it. Ukura responded that she has an area of concentration in journalism and did not remember the Web materials being boldly clear that the templates were just samples and students have other options. Guyotte asked Ukura if she thought that students know the difference between disciplinary and interdisciplinary or English and journalism. Ukura responded that she did not know that journalism is a pre-professional program and that is why it's not offered as a major at UMM. It should however say more boldly and visually obvious that the templates are samples. Haugen suggested that a watermark with the word "Sample" across the template might help.

3. WRITING-INTENSIVE LEARNING OUTCOMES PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

Guyotte informed the committee that division chairs have been looking at how much writing goes on in UMM courses above and beyond the College Writing course. They are in the process of compiling an impressive inventory in answering that question. It's important to address it since assessment and accreditation procedures are talking about the concept of learning outcomes. People from students to parents to legislators want to know what students should and do know when they graduate from college. One way to determine it is to declare learning outcomes. The division chairs group may present the committee with the results of their work at a future Curriculum Committee meeting.

Guyotte thanked everyone for attending the recent dean candidate meetings. He also reminded the committee that its next meeting will be on October 25.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Submitted by Darla Peterson